

## **Caritate Christi Compulsi**

ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS  
PIUS XI

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE  
POPE

TO THE PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES, ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS,  
AND OTHER ORDINARIES IN PEACE AND COMMUNION  
WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE

ON

OFFERING PRAYER AND EXPIATION TO THE  
SACRED HEART OF JESUS IN THE PRESENT  
DISTRESS OF THE HUMAN RACE

POPE PIUS XI

VENERABLE BRETHREN: HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BENE-  
DICTION:

**U**RGED by the charity of Christ We have invited, with the Encyclical "Nova Impendet" of October 2 of last year, all members of the Catholic Church, indeed all men of good will, to unite in a holy crusade of love and succor, in order to alleviate in some measure the terrible consequences of the economic crisis under which the human race is struggling. And truly wonderful was the unanimous enthusiasm with which the generosity and activity of all answered Our appeal. But distress has increased, the number of the unemployed has grown in practically all parts, and subversive elements are making use of the fact for their propaganda; hence public order is threatened more and more, and the peril of terrorism and anarchy hangs over society ever more ominously. Such being the case, the same charity of Christ moves us to turn once again to you, Venerable Brethren, to the Faithful in your charge, to the whole world, and to exhort all to unite and to resist with all their might the evils that are crushing humanity and the still graver evils that are threatening.

(Text by special cable to N. C. W. C. News Service.)

## CHAPTER ONE

If we pass in review the long and sorrowful sequence of woes that, as a sad heritage of sin, mark the stages of fallen man's earthly pilgrimage from the Flood on, it would be hard to find spiritual and material distress so deep, so universal, as that which we are now experiencing; even the greatest scourges that left indelible traces in the lives and memories of peoples struck only one nation at a time. Now, on the contrary, the whole of humanity is held bound by the financial and economic crisis so fast that the more it struggles the harder appears the task of loosening its bonds; there is no people, there is no state, no society, or family which in one way or another, directly or indirectly, to a greater or less extent, does not feel the repercussion. Even those, very few in number, who appear to have in their hands, together with enormous wealth, the destinies of the world, even those very few who with their speculations were and are in great part the cause of so much woe are themselves quite often the first and most notorious victims, dragging down with themselves into the abyss the fortunes of countless others, thus verifying in a terrible manner and before the whole world what the Holy Ghost had already proclaimed for every sinner in particular: "By what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented."

This deplorable state of things, Venerable Brethren, makes Our paternal heart groan and makes Us feel more and more deeply the need of adopting, in the measure of Our insufficiency, the sublime sentiment of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: "I have compassion on the multitude." But still more deplorable is the root from which springs this condition of affairs, or, if what the Holy Ghost affirms through the mouth of St. Paul is ever true, much more is it true at present: "The desire of money is the root of all evils." Is it not that lust of earthly goods that the pagan poet called with righteous scorn "the accursed hunger for gold," is it not that sordid egoism which too often regulates the mutual relations of individuals and society, is it not, in fine, greed, whatever be its species and form, that has brought the world to a pass we all see and deplore? From greed arises mutual distrust, that casts a blight on all human dealings; from greed arises hateful envy, which makes a man consider the

advantages of another as losses to himself; from greed arises narrow individualism, which orders and subordinates everything to its own advantage without taking account of others, on the contrary cruelly trampling under foot all rights of others. Hence the disorder and inequality from which arises the accumulation of the wealth of nations in the hands of a small group of individuals who manipulate the market of the world at their own caprice to the immense harm of the masses, as we showed last year in Our Encyclical Letter "Quadragesimo Anno."

Right order of Christian charity does not disapprove of lawful love of country and a sentiment of justifiable nationalism; on the contrary it controls sanctities and enlivens them. If, however, egoism, abusing this love of country and exaggerating this sentiment of nationalism, insinuates itself into the relations between people and people, there is no excess that will not seem justified; and that which between individuals would be judged blameworthy by all is now considered lawful and praiseworthy if it is done in the name of this exaggerated nationalism. Instead of the great law of love and human brotherhood, which embraces and holds in a single family all nations and peoples with one Father who is in heaven, there enters hatred, driving all to destruction. In public life sacred principles, the guide of all social intercourse, are trampled upon; the solid foundations of right and honesty, on which the state should rest, are undermined; polluted and closed are the sources of those ancient traditions which, based on faith in God and fidelity to His law, secured the true progress of nations.

Profiting by so much economic distress and so much moral disorder, the enemies of all social order, be they called Communists or any other name, boldly set about breaking through every restraint. This is the most dreadful evil of our times, for they destroy every bond of law, human or divine; they engage openly and in secret in a relentless struggle against religion and against God Himself; they carry out the diabolical program of wresting from the hearts of all, even of children, all religious sentiment; for well they know that when once belief in God has been taken from the heart of mankind they will be entirely free to work out their will. Thus we see today, what was never before seen in history, the satanical banners of war against God and against

religion brazenly unfurled to the winds in the midst of all peoples and in all parts of the earth.

There were never lacking impious men, nor men who denied God; but they were relatively few, isolated, and individual, and they did not care or did not think it opportune to reveal too openly their impious mind, as the inspired Psalmist appears to suggest, when he exclaims: "The fool hath said in his heart: there is no God." The impious, the atheist, lost in the crowd, denies God his Creator, but in the secret of his heart. Today, on the contrary, atheism has already spread through large masses of the people; well organized, it works its way even into the common schools; it appears in theaters; in order to spread it makes use of its own cinema films, of the gramophone and the radio; with its own printing presses it prints booklets in every language; it promotes special exhibitions and public parades; it has formed its own political parties and its own economic and military systems. This organized and militant atheism works untiringly by means of its agitators, with conferences and projections, with every means of propaganda secret and open among all classes, in every street, in every hall; it secures for this nefarious activity the moral support of its own universities, and holds fast the unwary with the mighty bonds of its organizing power. At the sight of so much activity placed at the service of so wicked a cause, there comes spontaneously to Our mind and to Our lips the mournful lament of Christ: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

The leaders of this campaign of atheism, turning to account the present economic crisis, inquire with diabolic reasoning into the cause of this universal misery. The Holy Cross of Our Lord, symbol of humility and poverty, is joined together with the symbols of modern imperialism, as though religion were allied with those dark powers which produce such evils among men. Thus they strive, and not without effect, to combine war against God with men's struggle for their daily bread, with their desire to have land of their own, suitable wages, and decent dwellings, in fine, a condition of life befitting human beings. The most legitimate and necessary desires, just as the most brutal instincts—everything serves their anti-religious program, as if the order established by God stood in contradiction with the

welfare of mankind, and were not on the contrary its only sure safeguard; as if human forces by means of modern mechanical power could combat the Divine forces and introduce a new and better ordering of things.

Now it is a lamentable fact that millions of men, under the impression that they are struggling for existence, grasp at such theories to the utter subversion of truth and cry out against God and religion. Nor are these assaults directed only against the Catholic religion, but against all who still recognize God as Creator of heaven and earth and as absolute Lord of all things. And the secret societies, always ready to support war against God and the Church no matter who wages it, do not fail to inflame ever more this insane hatred which can give neither peace nor happiness to any class of society, but will certainly bring all nations to disaster.

Thus, this new form of atheism, whilst unchaining man's most violent instincts, with cynical impudence proclaims that there will be neither peace nor welfare on earth until the last remnant of religion has been torn up and until its last representative has been crushed out of existence, as if in this way could be silenced the marvelous concert in which creation chants the glory of its Creator.

## CHAPTER TWO

We know very well, Venerable Brethren, that vain are all these efforts and that in the hour He has established God will arise and His enemies shall be scattered; we know that "the gates of hell shall not prevail;" we know that Our Divine Redeemer, as was foretold of Him, "shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked;" and for those unhappy beings terrible above all things will be the hour in which they fall "into the hands of the living God." And this unshaken confidence in the final triumph of God and the Church is through the infinite goodness of the Lord strengthened for us every day by the consoling sight of the generous enthusiasm for God on the part of countless souls in every quarter of the world and in all classes of society. It is indeed a powerful breathing of the Holy Spirit which is now passing over all the earth, drawing especially the souls of the young

to the highest Christian ideals, raising them above all human respect, rendering them ready for every sacrifice, even the most heroic—a divine breath that stirs all hearts, even in spite of themselves, and causes them to feel an inward impulse, a real thirst for God, to be forgiven by those who dare not confess it. It is also true that Our invitation to the laity to take part in the apostolate of the Hierarchy in the ranks of Catholic Action has been everywhere received with docility and generosity; in the cities and in the country their number is continuously increasing of those who with all their strength devote themselves to the propagation of Christian principles and to their practical application in public life, whilst they themselves strive to confirm their words with the example of their upright lives.

But none the less, confronted with so much impiety, such destruction of all the holiest traditions, such slaughter of immortal souls, such offenses against the Divine Majesty, We cannot, Venerable Brethren, refrain from pouring out the bitter grief of Our soul, We cannot refrain from raising Our voice, and with all the energy of Our Apostolic heart taking the defense of the downtrodden rights of God and of the most sacred sentiments of the human heart that has an absolute need of God. And this is all the more, since these hostile forces, impelled by the spirit of evil, do not content themselves with mere clamor, but unite all their strength in order to carry out at the first opportunity their nefarious designs. Woe to mankind if God, thus spurned by His creatures, allows in His justice free course to this devastating flood and uses it as a scourge to chastise the world. It is necessary, therefore, Venerable Brethren, that without faltering we "get up a wall for the house of Israel," that we likewise unite all our forces in one solid, compact line against the battalions of evil, enemies of God no less than of the human race. For in this conflict there is really question of the fundamental problem of the universe and of the most important decision proposed to man's free will. For God or against God, this once more is the alternative that shall decide the destinies of all mankind, in politics, in finance, in morals, in the sciences and arts, in the state, in civil and domestic society. In the East and in the West, everywhere this question confronts us as the deciding factor because of the consequences that flow from it. Thus even the advocates

of an altogether materialistic conception of the world always see rising before them the question of the existence of God that they thought had been ruled out once and for all, are ever constrained to take up again its discussion.

In the name of the Lord, therefore, We conjure individuals and nations, in the face of such problems and in the throes of a conflict of such vital interest for mankind, to put aside that narrow individualism and base egoism that blinds even the most clear sighted, that withers up all noble initiative as soon as it is no longer confined to a limited circle of paltry and particular interests. Let them all unite together, even at the cost of heavy sacrifices, to save themselves and mankind. In such a union of minds and forces they naturally ought to be the first who are proud of the Christian name, mindful of the glorious tradition of Apostolic time when "the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul." But let all those also loyally and heartily concur who still believe in God and adore Him in order to ward off from mankind the great danger that threatens all alike. For in truth, belief in God is the unshaken foundation of all social order and of all responsible action on earth; and therefore all those who do not want anarchy and terrorism ought to bestir themselves with a will in order that the enemies of religion may not attain the goal they have so loudly proclaimed to the world.

We are aware, Venerable Brethren, that in this battle for the defense of religion we must make use of all lawful means at our disposal. Therefore following in the wise path of our predecessor Leo XIII of saintly memory, in Our Encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno" We advocated so energetically a more equitable distribution of the goods of the earth and indicated the most efficacious means of restoring health and strength to the ailing social body and tranquillity and peace to its suffering members. For the unquenchable aspiration to reach a suitable state of happiness even on earth is planted in the heart of man by the Creator of all things, and Christianity has always recognized and ardently promoted every just effort of true culture and sound progress for the perfecting and developing of mankind.

However, in the face of this satanic hatred of religion, which reminds Us of the "mystery of iniquity" referred to by St. Paul, mere human means and expedients are not

enough, and we should consider ourselves wanting in Our Apostolic ministry if We did not point out to mankind those wonderful mysteries of light that alone contain the hidden strength to subjugate the unchained powers of darkness.

When Our Lord, coming down from the splendors of Thabor, had healed the boy tormented by the devil whom the disciples had not been able to cure, to their humble question, "Why could not we cast him out?" He made reply in the memorable words: "This kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting." It appears to Us, Venerable Brethren, that these Divine words find a peculiar application in the evils of our times that can be averted only by means of prayer and penance.

Mindful then of our condition, that we are essentially limited and absolutely dependent on the Supreme Being, before everything else let us have recourse to prayer. We know through faith how great is the power of humble, trustful, persevering prayer; and to no other pious work have ever been attached such ample, such universal, such solemn promises as to prayer! "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." "Amen, amen, I say to you if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you."

And what object could be more worthy of our prayer and more in keeping with the adorable Person of Him who is the only "Mediator of God and men, the Man Jesus Christ" than to beseech Him to preserve on earth faith in one God living and true? Such prayer bears already in itself a part of its answer; for in the very act of prayer a man unites himself with God, and, so to speak, keeps alive on earth the idea of God. The man who prays merely by his humble posture professes before the world his faith in the Creator and Lord of all things; joined with others in prayer he recognizes that not only the individual but human society as a whole has over it a supreme and absolute Lord.

What a spectacle for heaven and earth is not the Church in prayer! For centuries without interruption, from midnight to midnight, is repeated on earth the divine psalmody of the inspired canticles; there is no hour of the day that is not hallowed by its special liturgy; there is no stage of life



great or small that has not its part in the thanksgiving, praise, supplication, and reparation of the common prayer of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. Thus prayer of itself assures the presence of God among men, according to the promise of the Divine Redeemer: "Where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

In addition, prayer will remove the fundamental cause of present day difficulties which We have mentioned above—that is, the insatiable greed for earthly goods. The man who prays looks above to the goods of heaven whereon he meditates and which he desires; his whole being is plunged in the contemplation of the marvelous order established by God, which knows not the frenzy of success and does not lose itself in futile competitions of ever increasing speed; and thus automatically, as it were, will be reestablished that equilibrium between work and rest, whose entire absence from society today is responsible for grave dangers to life physical, economic, and moral. If therefore those who through the excessive production of manufactured articles have fallen into unemployment and poverty made up their minds to give the proper time to prayer, there is no doubt that work and production would soon return to reasonable limits and that the conflict which now divides humanity into two great camps struggling for transient interests would be changed into a noble and peaceful contest for goods heavenly and eternal.

In like manner will the way be opened to the peace we long for, as St. Paul beautifully remarks in the passage where he joins the precept of prayer to holy desires for the peace and salvation of all men: "I desire therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings, and all that are in high station, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all piety and chastity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God Our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth." Let peace be implored for all men, but especially for those who in human society have the grave responsibilities of government; for how could they give peace to their peoples if they have it not themselves? And it is prayer precisely that, according to the Apostle will bring the gift of peace; prayer

that is addressed to the Heavenly Father who is the Father of all men; prayer that is the common expression of family feelings, of that great family which extends beyond the boundaries of any country and continent.

Men who in every nation pray to the same God for peace on earth cannot be at the same time bearers of discord among peoples; men who turn in prayer to the Divine Majesty cannot foment that nationalistic imperialism which of each people makes its own god; men who look to the "God of Peace and of Love," who turn to Him through the mediation of Christ, Who is "Our Peace," will know no rest until finally that peace which the world cannot give comes down from the Giver of every good gift on "men of good will."

"Peace be to you" was the Easter greeting of Our Lord to His Apostles and first disciples; and this blessed greeting from those first times until our day has never been absent from the sacred liturgy of the Church, and today more than ever it should comfort and refresh aching and oppressed human hearts.

### CHAPTER THREE

But to prayer we must also join penance, the spirit of penance and the practice of Christian penance. Thus Our Divine Master teaches us, whose first preaching was precisely penance: "Jesus began to preach and to say, do penance." The same is the teaching of all Christian tradition, of the whole history of the Church; in the great calamities, in the great tribulations of Christianity, when the need of God's help was most pressing, the Faithful either spontaneously or more often following the lead and exhortations of their holy pastors, have always taken in hand the two most mighty weapons of spiritual life—prayer and penance. By that sacred instinct, by which unconsciously as it were the Christian people are guided when not led astray by the sowers of tares, and which is none other than that "Mind of Christ" of which the Apostle speaks, the Faithful have always felt immediately in such cases the need of purifying their souls from sin with contrition of heart, with the sacrament of reconciliation, and of appeasing Divine justice with external works of penance as well.

Certainly We know, and with you, Venerable Brethren, We deplore the fact that in our day the idea and the name of expiation and penance have with many lost in great part the power of rousing enthusiasm of heart and heroism of sacrifice. In other times they were able to inspire such feelings, for they appeared in the eyes of men of faith as sealed with a divine mark in likeness of Christ and His Saints: but nowadays there are some who would put aside external mortifications as things of the past—without mentioning the modern "autonomous man" who despises penance as bearing the mark of servitude. As a fact the notion of the need of penance and expiation is lost in proportion as belief in God is weakened, and the idea of an original sin and of a first rebellion of man against God becomes confused and disappears.

But We on the other hand, Venerable Brethren, have the duty of the Pastoral Office of bearing aloft these names and ideas and of preserving them in their true meaning, in their genuine dignity, and still more in their practical and necessary application to Christian life. To this We are urged by the very defense of God and religion which We sustain, since penance is of its nature a recognition and re-establishment of the moral order in the world that is founded on the eternal law, that is on the living God. He who makes satisfaction to God for sin recognizes thereby the sanctity of the highest principles of morality, their internal binding power, the need of a sanction against their violation. Certainly one of the most dangerous errors of our age is the claim to separate morality from religion, thus removing all solid basis for any legislation. This intellectual error might perhaps have passed unnoticed and appeared less dangerous when it was confined to a few, and belief in God was still the common heritage of mankind, and was tacitly presumed even in the case of those who no longer professed it openly. But today, when atheism is spreading through the masses of the people, the practical consequences of such an error become dreadfully tangible, and realities of the saddest kind make their appearance in the world.

In place of moral laws, which disappear together with the loss of faith in God, brute force is imposed, tramping on every right. Old-time fidelity and honesty of conduct and mutual intercourse, extolled so much even by the orators

and poets of paganism, now give place to speculations in one's own affairs, as in those of others, without reference to conscience. In fact, how can any contract be maintained and what value can any treaty have in which every guarantee of conscience is lacking? And how can there be talk of guarantees of conscience when all faith in God and all fear of God has vanished? Take away this basis, and with it all moral law falls, and there is no remedy left to stop the gradual but inevitable destruction of peoples, families, the state, civilization itself.

Penance then is, as it were, a salutary weapon placed in the hands of the valiant soldiers of Christ who wish to fight for the defense and restoration of the moral order in the universe. It is a weapon that strikes right at the root of all evil, that is, at the dust of material wealth and the wanton pleasures of life. By means of voluntary sacrifices, by means of practical and even painful acts of self-denial, by means of various works of penance, the noble-hearted Christian subdues the base passions that tend to make him violate the moral order. But if zeal for Divine law and brotherly love are as great in him as they should be, then not only does he practice penance for himself and his own sins, but he takes upon himself the expiation of the sins of whole generations, imitating even the Divine Redeemer, who became the Lamb of God "who taketh away the sins of the world."

Is there not perchance, Venerable Brethren, in this spirit of penance also a sweet mystery of peace? "There is no peace to the wicked," says the Holy Spirit, because they live in continuous struggle and conflict with the order established by nature and by its Creator. Only when this order is restored, when all peoples faithfully and spontaneously recognize and profess it, when the internal conditions of peoples and their outward relations with other nations are founded on this basis, then only will stable peace be possible on earth. But to create this atmosphere of lasting peace, neither peace treaties, nor the most solemn pacts, nor international meetings or conferences, not even the noblest and most disinterested efforts of any statesman will be enough, unless in the first place are recognized the sacred rights of natural and Divine law. No leader in public economy, no power of organization will even be able to bring so-

cial conditions to a peaceful solution, unless first in the very field of economics there triumphs moral law based on God and conscience. This is the underlying value of every value in the political life as well as in the economic life of nations; this is the soundest "rate of exchange." If it is kept steady all the rest will be stable, being guaranteed by the immutable and eternal law of God.

And even for men individually penance is the foundation and bearer of true peace, detaching them from earthly and perishable goods, lifting them up to goods that are eternal, giving them, even in the midst of privations and adversity, a peace that the world with all its wealth and pleasures cannot give. One of the most pleasing and joyous songs ever heard in this vale of tears is without doubt the famous "Canticle of the Sun" of St. Francis. Now the man who composed it, who wrote and sang it, was one of the greatest penitents, the Poor Man of Assisi, who possessed absolutely nothing on earth, and bore in his emaciated body the painful stigmata of his crucified Lord.

Prayer, then, and penance are the two potent inspirations sent to us at this time by God that we may lead back to Him mankind that has gone astray and wanders about without a guide; they are the inspirations that will dispel and remedy the first and principal cause of every revolt and every revolution—the revolt of man against God. But the peoples themselves are called upon to make up their minds to a definite choice: either they entrust themselves to these benevolent and beneficent inspirations and are converted, humble, and repentant, to the Lord and the Father of Mercies, or they abandon themselves and what little remains of happiness on earth to the mercy of the enemy of God, to the spirit of vengeance and destruction.

Nothing remains for Us therefore save to invite this poor world that has shed so much blood, has dug so many graves, has destroyed so many works, has deprived so many men of bread and labor—nothing else remains for Us, We say, but to invite it in the loving words of the sacred liturgy: "Be thou converted to the Lord thy God."

## CHAPTER FOUR

What more suitable occasion can We point out to you, Venerable Brethren, for such a union of prayer and reparation than the approaching Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus? The proper spirit of this solemnity, as we amply showed four years ago in Our Encyclical Letter, "*Miserentissimus*," is the spirit of loving reparation, and therefore it was Our will that on that day every year in perpetuity there should be made in all the churches of the world a public act of reparation for all the offenses that wound that Divine Heart.

Let, therefore, this year the Feast of the Sacred Heart be for the whole Church one of holy rivalry of reparation and supplication. Let the faithful hasten in large numbers to the Eucharistic Board, hasten to the foot of the altar to adore the Redeemer of the World, under the veils of the Sacrament, that you, Venerable Brethren, will have solemnly exposed that day in all the churches, let them pour out to that Merciful Heart that has known all the griefs of the human heart, the fullness of their sorrow, the steadfastness of their faith, the trust of their hope, the ardor of their charity. Let them pray to Him, interposing likewise the powerful patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, for themselves and for their families, for their country, for the Church; let them pray to Him for the Vicar of Christ on Earth and for all the other pastors who share with him the dread burden of the spiritual government of souls; let them pray for their brethren who believe, for their brethren who err, for believers, for infidels, even for the enemies of God and the Church that they may be converted, and let them pray for the whole of poor mankind.

Let this spirit of prayer and reparation be maintained with keen earnestness and intensity by all the Faithful during the entire octave, to which dignity we have determined to raise this feast; and during this octave, in the manner that each of you, Venerable Brethren, according to local circumstances, shall think opportune to prescribe or counsel, let there be public prayers and other devout exercises of piety for the intentions We have briefly touched on above "that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid."

May this be indeed for the whole Christian people an octave of reparation and of holy sadness; let these be days of mortification and of prayer. Let the faithful abstain at least from entertainments and amusements however lawful; let those who are in easier circumstances deduct also something voluntarily, in the spirit of Christian austerity, from the moderate measure of their usual manner of life, bestowing rather on the poor the proceeds of this retrenchment, since almsgiving is also an excellent means of satisfying Divine justice and drawing down Divine mercies. And let the poor, and all those who at this time are facing the hard trial of want of work and scarcity of food, let them in a like spirit of penance offer with greater resignation the privations imposed on them by these hard times and the state of society, which Divine Providence in an inscrutable but ever loving plan has assigned them. Let them accept with a humble and trustful heart from the hand of God the effects of poverty, rendered harder by the distress in which mankind is now struggling; let them rise more generously even to the divine sublimity of the Cross of Christ, reflecting on the fact that if work is among the greatest values of life, it was nevertheless love of a suffering God that saved the world; let them take comfort in the certainty that their sacrifices and their troubles borne in a Christian spirit will concur efficaciously to hasten the hour of mercy and peace.

The Divine Heart of Jesus cannot but be moved at the prayers and sacrifices of His Church, and He will finally say to His spouse, weeping at His feet under the weight of so many griefs and woes: "Great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt." With this confidence, strengthened by the memory of the Cross, sacred symbol and precious instrument of our holy Redemption, the glorious invention of which we celebrate today, to you, Venerable Brethren, to your clergy and people, to the whole Catholic world, We impart with paternal love the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the Feast of The Invention of The Holy Cross, the third of May in the year of 1932, the eleventh of our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. XI.

# The Pope and the Depression

WILFRID PARSONS, S.J.

*The following article translates into terms of modern American business practice some of the statements of Pope Pius and Pope Leo.*

*The paper is reprinted from America, and was written by the Editor of that Review of the Week.*

**S**TARTLING surprises are in store for anyone who will take up Pope Pius XI's Encyclical "On the Reconstruction of the Social Order," and read it realistically by translating it into terms of modern American business practice. Everybody knows that both Leo XIII in the "Rerum Novarum" and Pius XI in his Encyclical roundly condemned Socialism and Communism, espoused the cause of labor unionism, and recalled the world to the observance of justice and charity. Beyond that, the knowledge of what dynamite is contained in those documents is limited so far to a very few.

Few, for instance, know that Pope Pius exposes and condemns the modern concentration of capital in a relatively few hands; that he has a hard word to say for high taxes and government extravagance, two things that go together; that he flatly berates the famous Hoover principle of "rugged individualism"; that he calls for the abolition of such things as the anti-trust laws and the philosophy of free competition that underlies them; that the bankers and their economic imperialism come in for a devastating blow; that economic nationalism with its system of high tariffs is put in its place; that holding companies, irresponsible boards of directors, the Farm Board, the Federal Reserve, are given a very high place in his estimate of what causes our present troubles.

Fewer still, of course, are aware that Pope Pius has high words of praise for the syndicalist form of government that we know as Fascism, and almost nobody, apparently, knows that he proposes in the place of the world's evils a system of trade associations under the State's protection in which both capital and labor are represented.

*Rugged individualism.* Pius XI places this "typically



American" system, to use the words of its admirers, on the same plane with Communism. "There is a double danger to be avoided. On the one hand, if the social and public aspect of ownership be denied or minimized, the logical consequence is Individualism, as it is called. On the other hand, the rejection or diminution of its private and individual character necessarily leads to some form of Collectivism."

*Free competition.* This is the heart of Individualism. "This school, ignorant or forgetful of the social and moral aspects of economics, teaches that the State should refrain in theory and practice from interfering therein, because these possess in free competition and open markets a principle of self-direction better able to control them than any created intellect." We know that it was this school that passed our anti-trust laws. Pope Pius goes on: "Free competition, however, though within certain limits just and productive of good results, cannot be the ruling principle of the economic world."

*"Free competition is dead."* This is his startling conclusion. What killed it? It killed itself. "Economic dictatorship has taken its place." By its very freedom from State intervention it was able to gather more and more wealth and power in its hands. "This accumulation of power, the characteristic note of the modern economic order, is a natural result of limitless free competition which permits the survival of those only who are the strongest, which often means those who fight most relentlessly, who pay least heed to the dictates of conscience."

*Economic dictatorship.* This dictatorship is irresponsible. "It is patent that in our days not alone is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hands of a few, and that those few are frequently *not the owners*, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, who administer them at their good pleasure." Then Pius uses these striking words: "The regulations legally enacted for corporations, with their divided responsibility and limited liability, have given rise to abominable abuses. The greatly weakened accountability, as is evident, makes little impression upon the conscience. The worst injustices and frauds take place beneath the obscurity of the common name of a corporative firm. Boards of di-

rectors proceed in their unconscionable methods even to the violation of their trust in regard to those whose savings they administer." The Pope's reference to the manipulations of investment trusts and holding companies is too obvious to need stressing.

*Tariffs and nationalism.* This is Pope Pius' diagnosis of the warfare that results in high and ruinous tariffs: "This concentration of power has led to a threefold struggle for domination. First, there is the struggle for dictatorship in the economic sphere itself; then, the fierce battle to acquire control of the State, so that its resources and authority may be abused in the economic struggles; finally, the clash between States themselves. This arises from two causes: because the nations apply their power and political influence, regardless of circumstances, to promote the economic advantages of their citizens; and because, vice versa, economic forces and economic domination are used to decide political controversies between peoples."

*Government in business.* "Less government in business and more business in government," is the slogan of the Chamber-of-Commerce-minded people who still cling to the old idea of free competition. To overcome inequalities in ownership the Pope demands government interference. He remarks: "The Encyclical 'Rerum Novarum' completely overthrew those tottering tenets of Liberalism which had long hampered effective interference by the Government." The need of the State's intervention to redress the balance is the greater, he thinks, because of the very excesses of individualism, since through it, "social life lost entirely its organic form."

*Limits of government interference.* Yet, he holds, "the intermingling and scandalous confusing of the duties and offices of the civil authority and of economics have produced crying evils and have gone so far as to degrade the majesty of the State." The application to the antics of the Farm Board over wheat, and to other attempts at price fixing in copper, oil, rubber, coffee, nitrates, and sugar, is clear enough. It is in the larger aspects that Government must intervene, for "free competition, and still more economic dictatorship, must be kept within just and definite limits, and must be brought under the effective control of the public authority, in matters pertaining to this latter's compe-

tence." Outstanding examples, of course, are the public utilities, and the other quasi-necessary monopolies.

*Results of free competition.* "Capital was long able to appropriate to itself excessive advantages; it claimed all the products and profits and left to the laborer the barest minimum necessary to repair his strength and to ensure the continuation of his class." Yet, as Pius quotes Leo, "It is only by the labor of workingmen that States grow rich." And he himself asks: "Is it not indeed apparent that the huge possessions which constitute human wealth are begotten by and flow from the hands of the workingman, toiling either unaided or with the assistance of tools and machinery which wonderfully intensify his efficiency?" "The immense number of propertyless wage earners on the one hand, and the superabundant riches of the fortunate few on the other, is an unanswerable argument that the earthly goods so abundantly produced in this age of industrialism are far from rightly distributed among the various classes of men."

*The remedy for inequality.* Socialism, of course, and Communism are condemned. The labor theory of value of Marx is outlawed: "entirely false is the principle, widely propagated today, that the worth of labor and therefore the equitable return to be made for it, should equal the worth of its net result." The "sacred law" of social justice "is violated by an irresponsible wealthy class who, in excess of their good fortune, deem it a just state of things that they should receive everything and the laborer nothing; it is violated also by a propertyless wage-earning class who demand for themselves all the fruits of production, as being the work of their hands." "Every effort, therefore, must be made that at least in future a just share only of the fruits of production be permitted to accumulate in the hands of the wealthy, and that an ample sufficiency be supplied to the workingmen." What is an ample sufficiency? "The wage paid to the workingmen must be sufficient for the support of himself and of his family."

*Economic slavery vs. profit sharing.* Pius XI does not condemn the wage contract; in fact he says those who condemn it "are certainly in error." But he goes on: "In the present state of society, however, we deem it advisable that the wage contract should, when possible, be modified somewhat by a contract of partnership, as is already being tried

in various ways to the no small gain both of the wage earners and of the employers. In this way earners are made sharers in some sort in the ownership, or the management, *or the profits.*" This idea that the employes have a right to a share of the profits, after both labor and capital have received their just wage, occurs throughout Pope Pius' Encyclical. For production and its surplus return are the fruit of the partnership, not of one or the other. Both he and Pope Leo urge a wider distribution of ownership. The return to the worker must be such that he can actually save for a rainy day. This, it is clear, must come from his earnings, or by some sort of unemployment insurance paid for out of surplus.

*Trade Associations.* "Just as the unity of human society cannot be built on class warfare, so the proper ordering of economic affairs cannot be left to free competition alone." Free competition "is a headstrong and vehement power. . . . It cannot be curbed and governed by itself." How then? By the free trade associations urged by Leo XIII, which were almost entirely ignored, and which Pius XI now brings forward again. Society must be reconstructed. "The aim of social legislation, therefore, must be the re-establishment of vocational groups." The reason is that only collaboration between all classes of society will save us from the abyss. This collaboration will be ruled by justice; "those who practise the same trade or profession, economic or otherwise, [will] combine into vocational groups," employers and employed in separate sections, but closely collaborating in their trade, while the State will confine its activities, after the necessary legislation, to "directing, watching, stimulating, and restraining." Michael O'Shaughnessy has worked out the plan for the United States.

*A word from Pope Pius for Catholics.* "There are some who can abuse religion itself, cloaking their own unjust imposition under its name, that they may protect themselves against the clearly just demands of their employes. We shall never desist from gravely censuring such conduct. Such men are the cause that the Church, without deserving it, may have the appearance of taking sides with the wealthy, and of being little moved by the needs and sufferings of the disinherited."